



PRESS RELEASE

State Environmental Officials Award Funds to Improve Habitat Health in Ipswich Bay and Massachusetts Bay

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

5/04/2018

Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management

MEDIA CONTACT

Katie Gronendyke



Phone

617-626-1129



Online

katie.gronendyke@state.ma.us

BOSTON — State environmental officials today announced \$110,000 in federal funds to help towns and organizations improve ecosystem health in Ipswich Bay and Massachusetts Bay through the

Massachusetts Bays National Estuary Program's Healthy Estuary Grants. The funds will be matched by \$86,210 in municipal and private contributions and support the Massachusetts Bays National Estuary Program's (MassBays) mission to protect, restore, and enhance the estuarine resources of the region.

"The federal, state, and local partnerships fostered by the Healthy Estuary grants create momentum for successful habitat protection and climate change adaptation projects," **said Governor Charlie Baker**. "Our administration looks forward to continuing our work with Massachusetts coastal communities to identify and promote important local projects that have a lasting impact on environmental protection and preservation."

"The Healthy Estuary grants allow us to provide federal funds to local projects that directly improve water quality and habitat health in the Commonwealth's bays and estuaries," **said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Matthew Beaton**. "Many of these innovative projects also address the impacts of climate change at the local level, and play a critical role in the Baker-Polito Administration's efforts to adapt to climate change and address its impacts by protecting and restoring coastal habitats."

The Healthy Estuaries grants are being awarded by the [Massachusetts Bays National Estuary Program](#) (MassBays) through the [Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management](#) (CZM) with funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

"MassBays is committed to protecting our estuaries through effective partnerships, and these grants are a prime example of successfully using federal and state resources to address local water quality, habitat and climate adaptation issues," **said CZM Director Bruce Carlisle**.

"We look forward to working with community partners on these local initiatives," **said Pam DiBona, Executive Director of MassBays**. "MassBays will use their findings to prompt estuarine habitat restoration across the entire region."

The following five projects are being funded:

Ipswich River Watershed Association (IRWA) - \$18,000 - The recently completed *Great Marsh Barriers Assessment* provides a comprehensive regional assessment of barriers to streamflow and tidal exchange in the Great Marsh. With grant funding, IRWA will work with communities to identify 15-20 projects to reduce impacts of these barriers. This effort will forward on-the-ground restoration actions to increase habitat and community resilience to climate change impacts. IRWA will hold training workshops focusing on lessons learned and opportunities to implement the approach beyond the region.

Massachusetts Oyster Project (MOP) - \$15,545 - For several years, MOP has been working to restore sustainable oyster populations in Massachusetts. In 2017, they raised 60,000 oyster spat in Gloucester and provided an associated educational program for 5,000 students and 20,000 visitors to Gloucester

Maritime. With this funding, MOP will strengthen the Gloucester program and replicate it in Marblehead, anticipating distributing between 200,000 and 240,000 juvenile oysters to permitted locations in North Shore estuaries.

Salem State University - \$27,715 - Building off research conducted since 2012, Salem State University will continue to pursue its goal to improve water quality in Salem Harbor. This award will help researchers provide a better understanding of links between high phytoplankton levels and deteriorating water quality and decreasing eelgrass habitat, which will help inform restoration efforts.

Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA) - \$33,000 - Restoration projects in the Mystic River watershed are resulting in gradual improvements, including the return of herring and other anadromous fish to its waters. Working with the Department of Conservation and Recreation, bordering cities, and other stakeholders, MyRWA will plan work in Mill Creek (Chelsea) to re-establish salt marsh communities and improve tidal flow, and conduct a feasibility assessment to establish a bordering marsh on Draw 7 Park's (Somerville) eroded beach. These actions will restore access to these areas by surrounding communities for recreation, as well as improve habitat health and climate resilience.

The Trustees of Reservations - \$15,740 - This project involves field work in the Parker River Estuary to reduce the negative impacts of past "ditching" on marsh habitat, to restore the marsh's ability to buffer neighboring communities from storm surge and rising sea levels. Targeting 85 acres of salt marsh at Old Town Hill in Newbury, the project will implement a new and innovative, nature-based technique to reverse some ditching. If successful, this method will help existing coastal marsh ecosystems keep pace with sea level rise.

"It's great to see the MassBays National Estuary Program working so successfully to support local projects that make a lasting difference in these important coastal waters," **said United States Senator Ed Markey**. "Congratulations to these five grant recipients for proposing practical solutions to protect and improve coastal habitats that are vital to wildlife, water quality and fisheries."

"In these times of climate change and disruption to our waterways, I am pleased to see that the MA Bays National Estuary Program is awarding grant money to improve streamflow in the Great Marsh and will also provide added support to the Maritime Gloucester Oyster Project," **stated State Representative Ann-Margaret Ferrante (D-Gloucester)**. "These initiatives will provide much needed progress toward our shared goal of protecting and restoring our precious waterways."

"The Healthy Estuaries Grants program has been a significant support to efforts to protect and restore estuarine habitats," **stated State Senator Joan B. Lovely (D-Salem)**. "I am pleased that the ongoing research of Salem State University will be supported through this funding which will provide critical information ensuring the effectiveness of restoration efforts. Thank you to the Baker Polito

Administration and Coastal Zone Management for their leadership to administer and support this program.”

“These MassBays Healthy Estuary grants focus on making a positive difference for the environment at the local level,” **said State Representative Bradford R. Hill (R-Ipswich)**. “I commend the organizations on the North Shore and beyond who are building these partnerships and proactively addressing emerging environmental issues.”

“Each of these locally led initiatives are worthy of our support and I am pleased that the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management has elected to award these grants to organizations that are truly on the cutting edge of pioneering new techniques and methodologies to protect, enhance and improve habitats and natural conditions in these estuaries,” **said Senate Minority Leader Bruce Tarr (R-Gloucester)**. “These unique waters represent essential habitats that face challenges from pathogens, drought, pollution, invasive species, and storm water runoff; these grants will aid their protection and resilience.”

As part of the Baker-Polito Administration’s commitment to combat and prepare for climate change, Governor Baker recently filed [legislation](#) to authorize over \$1.4 billion in capital allocations for investments in safeguarding residents, municipalities and businesses from the impacts of climate change, protecting environmental resources, and investing in communities. The legislation would put into law essential components of Governor Baker’s [Executive Order 569](#), which established an integrated strategy for climate change adaptation across the Commonwealth, including the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program and the [Statewide Hazard Mitigation and Adaptation Plan](#) – a blueprint to protect residents, communities, and local economies. Federal funds granted through the Massachusetts Bays and Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program bolster this significant investment.

The Office of Coastal Zone Management is EEA’s lead policy and planning agency on coastal and ocean issues. The Massachusetts Bays National Estuary Program (an [EPA-funded program](#)) facilitates partnerships to prompt local, state and federal action and stewardship by convening stakeholders on the local and regional level, providing scientific basis for management decisions and working with decisionmakers to identify problems and solutions in Ipswich Bay, Massachusetts Bay and Cape Cod Bay (Salisbury to Provincetown).

###

Media Contact

Katie Gronendyke



Phone

617-626-1129



Online

katie.gronendyke@state.ma.us

Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs →

EEA seeks to protect, preserve, and enhance the Commonwealth's environmental resources while ensuring a clean energy future for the state's residents. Through the stewardship of open space, protection of environmental resources, and enhancement of clean energy, the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs works tirelessly to make Massachusetts a wonderful place to live, work, and raise a family.

More →

Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management →

CZM is the lead policy, planning, and technical assistance agency on coastal and ocean issues within the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) and implements the state's Coastal Management Program under the federal Coastal Zone Management Act.

More →